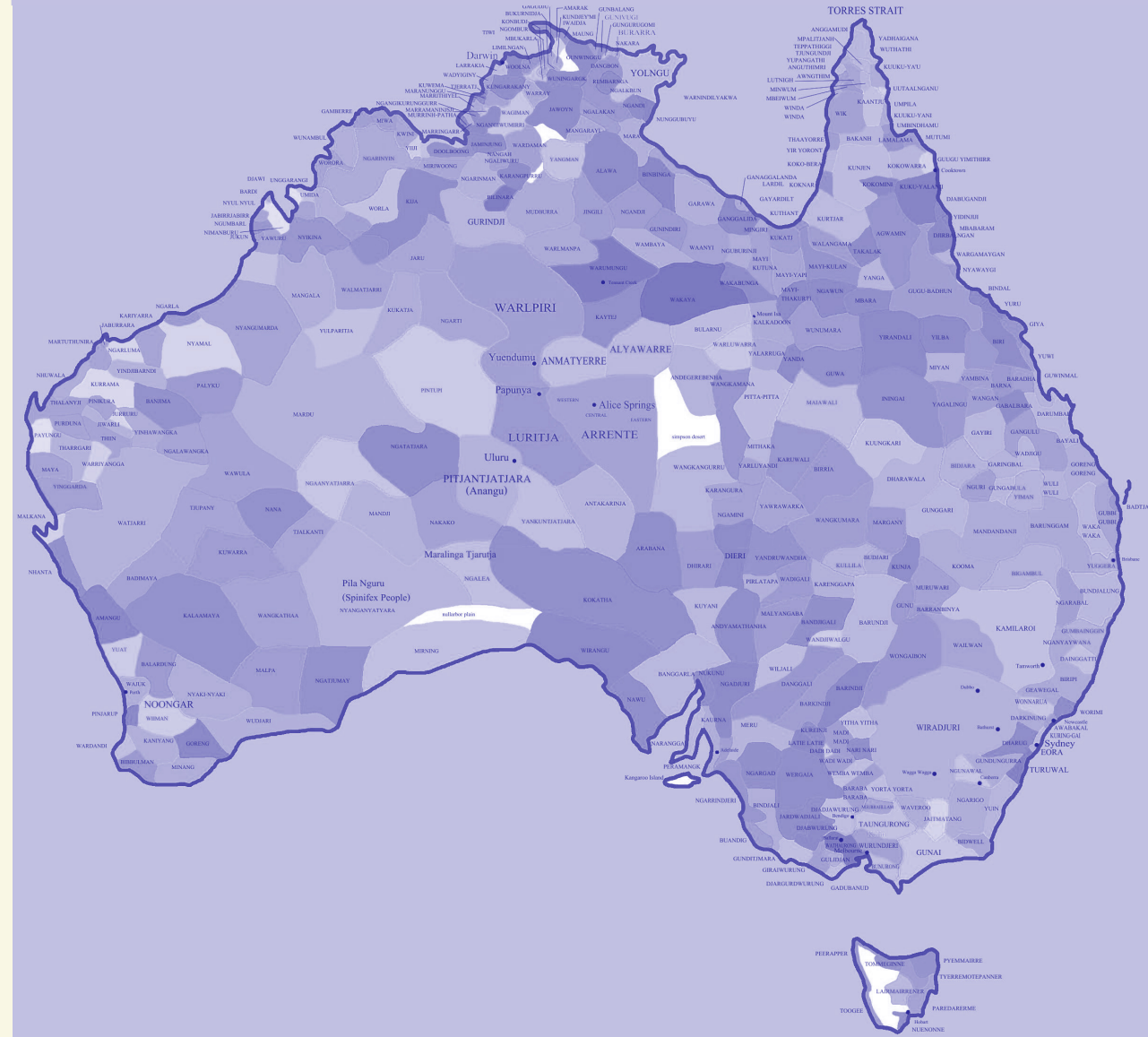




Participatory Evaluation with Young People from Diverse Cultural Communities

Reflections, Challenges and Practical
Learnings

Acknowledgement of Country



Youth Ambassador Program

Creating a **culturally safe space** for young people from diverse cultural communities to...

...develop a sense of **belonging**

...build **skills, knowledge, networks and confidence**

...to become an **empowered and influential** part of Australian society, participating fully in their own right and on their own terms.

Key points

- Participatory approach added incredible value to the evaluation:
 - More culturally safe, inclusive and accessible data collection
- But it came with challenges:
 - Resourcing
 - Scope for influence and participation
- Nine practical learnings
 - *To be revealed...*

First up...

We are both white evaluators from the dominant culture.

Sam's cultural history

- English convicts (end 1700's)
- Scottish settlers (mid 1800's)
- Working on farms in Armidale area for a few generations

Eleanor's cultural history

- English parents migrated here in 1970s
- Farming near Canberra

Practical learning #1:

Share your story
when you're asking
for theirs.

Participatory Evaluation

- Capacity building workshops
- Input to and review of evaluation plan
- Designing survey, interview and focus group protocol
- Conducting peer interviews and focus groups
- Identifying findings and developing recommendations
- Review of draft evaluation report



Value of a participatory approach: More culturally safe, inclusive and accessible data collection

- Review of survey, interview, focus group questions to make sure they were clear
- Demographic info

Practical learning #2:

No “other” option (e.g. for gender). *“It’s othering.”*

We went with “describe yourself”

Practical learning #3:

Preference for open-answer questions to describe heritage / cultural identity. Rather than e.g. country of birth, what language you speak at home.

Heritage or cultural identity? (e.g. Chinese Australian, Ghanaian-Afro-Aussie etc)

Value of a participatory approach: More culturally safe, inclusive and accessible data collection

Practical learning #4:

Emotional safety in interviews / focus groups

- Not making it too formal
- Giving questions beforehand
- Not pointing it out when someone says something unusual *“Oh that’s interesting, I haven’t heard that before”*
- Don’t try too hard to be cool 😎

Cultural safety in interviews / focus groups

- Not asking someone to speak on something that they’re not comfortable talking about
- Not asking someone to represent their whole community
- Having interviewers with similar experiences as the interviewees

Challenge: Resourcing

- Recruiting, keeping people involved
- Resourcing capacity building and rounds of feedback
- Cost of paying people for their expertise

Practical learning #6:

1. Capacity building workshop to gather general input
2. Written draft with an explainer video and feedback guide
3. Final version including summary of feedback and how it was incorporated

Practical learning #5:

- Approx. 5 hours per week to encourage ~10 young people to attend activities, follow up feedback e.t.c.
- 4-5 touchpoints per young person, per activity
- Keep in mind the time needed to have input (amount, frequency and duration)

Challenge: Scope for influence and participation

- Some things weren't able to be influenced
 - Funders requirements: how technology could enhance the program
 - Evaluation approaches
- Balancing capacity building with progressing the evaluation

Practical learning #7:

Communicate explicitly which parts of the evaluation they can influence.

The earlier you start involving stakeholders, the more that they will be able to influence.

Practical learning #8:

What capacity building will you need to do to support people to have input?

Key points

- Participatory approach added incredible value to the evaluation:
 - In particular, more culturally safe, inclusive and accessible data collection methods
- But it came with challenges:
 - Resourcing
 - Having a clear scope for what people need to participate and what they can influence
- **Plan early & resource appropriately**



Practical learning #9:

Be humble.

You know it's working when
you're feeling uncomfortable
or challenged.



Contact

for-purpose.org

Eleanor Booth – Managing
Director and Founder

eleanor@for-purpose.org

0467 504 014

Sam Cooper – Project Lead

sam@for-purpose.org

0490 112 942